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INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 002740

SIPDIS

STATE DEPT FOR OES/EGC:EFINDLEY, EUR/PGI:DTESSLER

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TAGS: KGHG SENV ENRG PREL PO

SUBJECT: PORTUGAL OPTIMISTIC ABOUT POZNAN CONFERENCE

REF: SECSTATE 119282

Classified By: Gary B. Applegarth, Pol-Econ Officer, Embassy
Lisbon Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Portugal is optimistic about progress at the upcoming UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) conference in Poznan. Fausto Brito e Abreu, Advisor to the State Secretary of the Environment, cited President-elect Obama's recent statements of support for emissions reductions and increased investment in clean energies numerous times in response to reftel points. "We understand it will take some time for programs to achieve these goals to be enacted, but we are hopeful for renewed U.S. leadership." Brito e Abreu granted that expectations must be tempered but said the Portuguese have recognized significant evolution in USG statements over time and believe U.S. and EU goals are coming more into line. He also agreed that, despite our differences in approach, it is important that talks be conducted in such a way as to maximize progress toward mutual long-term goals.

¶2. (C) Brito e Abreu hoped the potential failure of developing nations to agree to internationally binding commitments would not preclude U.S. commitments. He further hoped the U.S. would follow the Portuguese lead and strive for ambitious targets. (Note: Brito e Abreu was referring to Portugal's goals for power generation via renewable energies and biofuels inclusion in the transportation fuel supply, both of which are more ambitious than EU targets. End note.) Brito e Abreu argued that U.S. flexibility will pay off over time, and as progress is made toward President-elect Obama's stated goal of an 80 percent reduction in emissions compared to 1990 levels by 2050, developing nations' resistance to binding commitments would diminish.

3. (C) Comment: His assurances of reasonable expectations aside, Brito e Abreu is clearly counting on the incoming administration's climate change policies to be much more aligned to those of the EU, particularly regarding the need for key countries' commitments to be of similar legal character. We will likely have to engage in public diplomacy to temper unrealistic expectations in Portugal and elsewhere regarding the new administration's climate change agenda.

End comment.

STEPHENSON